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SUBJECT: CODEL HYDE: OVERVIEW

11. Summary. Chairman Hyde, Congressmen Rohrabacher, Faleomavaega, Watt (and Mrs. Watt) , and Flake (and Mrs. Flake), and their accompanying staff had a packed, productive August 11-13 trip to the Philippines. Highlights were a well-publicized wreath-laying ceremony at the Manila American Cemetery, a large reception hosted by Charge Jones, and a lively dinner hosted by President Arroyo. We find visits from U.S. members of Congress extremely useful and welcome more of them. End summary.

12. The August 11-13 visit of Chairman Hyde and his delegation was a resounding success. The primary events included dinner with President Arroyo, a well attended reception hosted by the Charge for U.S. and Filipino veterans, Philippine officials, and business leaders, and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Manila American Cemetery. An August 12 side trip to Corregidor highlighted one of the underlying aspects of the U.S.-Philippine relationship -- a treaty alliance forged in the shared sacrifice of World War II.

13. Chairman Hyde presided over the August 11 wreath-laying ceremony at the Manila American Cemetery, with graves of 16,636 U.S. and 570 Philippine servicemen who served with U.S. Forces in the Southwest Pacific. Chairman Hyde, himself a veteran of the 1945 landing at Lingayen Gulf to liberate the Philippines, spoke movingly of his nearly two years in the Philippines and of his fallen fellow soldiers. Aging Philippine and American veterans, as well as Father James Reuter, S.J. (a survivor of the Los Banos prison camp), participated in the commemoration and warmly welcomed the Chairman at its conclusion. (Note: In a separate, private ceremony on August 12, the Armed Forces of the Philippines awarded Chairman Hyde the Philippine Liberation Medal in recognition of his World War II service. End Note.)

14. A reception immediately afterward brought out American and Filipino veterans and an A-list of Philippine politicians and business executives, ranging from former President Ramos and Speaker of the House de Venecia to business magnate Lucio Tan. Congressmen Rohrabacher, Faleomavaega, Watt, and Flake discussed economic issues, defense reform, and counterterrorism cooperation in a relaxed setting. Afterwards and the following day, Congressman Rohrabacher held a series of bilateral meetings with a variety of Philippine political leaders, many of whom he knew from previous visits. President Arroyo hosted a lively discussion of efforts to improve the economy and combat terrorism over dinner on August 12.

15. The Philippine government enthusiastically received the Hyde delegation, at the same time as it received Senator

Inouye's delegation with equal enthusiasm. These visits from U.S. members of Congress are extremely useful in reaching out to and getting our messages across to senior levels of the Philippine government and business sectors. We welcome more of them.

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